**M I N U T E S**

**Of Witham Friary Parish Council**

**Held on Tuesday 11th July 2023 at Witham Friary Village Hall 7.30pm**

**Present:** Chair W Sheppard, Cllrs F Nicholls, S Coate, J Knowles, L Sewell

**Also Present:** J Gregory Proper Officer, plus 3 members of the public

**Public Participation**

Points raised:

* Transport Sexeys School. Agreed to follow up previous correspondence
* Pull Up Screen for use by users of the Village Hall. Agreed to purchase and added to asset register

**07.23/24.01 Apologies for absence**

All councillors present although County Councillor Clarke indicated he wouldn’t be attending this meeting due to other engagements.

**07.23/24.02 Declarations of interest**

Councillors were asked to declare any interests pecuniary or in the meeting this evening.

 **Resolved: No Declarations received.**

**07.23/24.03 Minutes of the previous meeting held**

To agree minutes from the previous meeting held on 13th June 2023

**Resolved: Cllr Sheppard noted in “present” twice, Cllr Coate to be added to list of attendees – deferred to August meeting for signature.**

**07.23/24.04 Planning Applications for consideration**

The Clerk advised no applications were received since the last meeting. However there had been an Appeal received on the Bindon Lane Equestrian Centre which was being held in August.

 **Action: Cllr Ferrari would progress with County Councillor Clarke**

**07.23/24.05 Finance**

1. To receive financial statement

Due to annual leave the June reconciliation had not been prepared however this would be reported at the August meeting.

1. To agree schedule of payments as indicated below

J Gregory Clerk Salary £ 279.96

SSE Electric Car park £ 125.27

Lengthsman Agreed hours £ 75.00

 **Resolved: The above payment schedule was agreed**

**07.23.24.07 Reports**

1. **To receive County Councillor B Clarke’s report**

Written report received due to absence covering 3 year financial forecast at Somerset Council, industrial action regarding waste collections, customer service points being installed in libraries, surface re-dressing in the county were amongst the parish relevant content.

1. **Chairman’s Report**

Covered in the following topics.

1. **Cllr Nicholls report on Highways**

The entrance to Private Road had been cut by a resident. Verges in the parish had been cut with the exception of Holt Road. With regard to scheduled re-surfacing Cllr Nicholls reported that the Parish were not subject to anything this time around.

**Action: Clerk to address verge cutting on Holt Road.**

1. **To receive report on Communications**

Cllr Ferrari stated that Sustainable Witham had progressed with a positive meeting which now included a children’s group. It was suggested that the request for a logo be a leaflet drop with space for a drawing/painting of the logo with further requests made on Facebook.

1. **To receive Cllr Sheppard/Knowles report on the Recreation Ground**

Cllr Knowles stated lots of dogs were making their way onto the field. Some of the “no dogs” signs had gone. Cllr Coate offered to review and place new signs where appropriate. Cllr Knowles had a stock of signs for use.

**Action: Cllr Coate to review and replace signage “no dogs”**

Cllr Sheppard suggested running the perimeter path which currently ran into the car park, along the edge of the car park. This would negate children running directly into the car park. This change would involve moving the benches which are set in concrete to other locations around the field. Conkers offered assistance with labour so would mean only costs in terms of stone/surfacing. There had also been a quotation from Mark Norris Electrical (not considered in detail at this stage) for running electric cable to the shed, possibly to be carried out whilst diggers were on site looking at the repositioning benches.

The basketball court was also considered as Cllr Sewell and Ferrari had investigated options. It seemed the most appropriate location was to mount the hoop on soft ground using the car park as a run up. This would mean a hatched area cordoned off but available for opening up for events.

**Action: Quotes of height restricted barriers and collapsible bollards to be obtained.**

Cllr Sheppard reported that football had removed their small goals and shed. He would assist with the larger goals. This would allow the cricket covers to be moved back and area to be tidied up.

1. **To receive Cllr Knowles report on the Play Patch**

Cllr Knowles stated the ROSPA was due imminently. The nest swing had been replaced along with the trail. We previously decided to wait to look at the ROSPA before considering more work. He noted a split in the green slide but had safety checked this and it didn’t appear an issue at present.

There had been an offer to cut the play patch from a resident. This required more investigation by the Clerk

**Action: Clerk to look at insurance etc in this regard**

1. **To receive Cllr Sewell report on Footpaths**

Cllr Sewell advised that there was lots of overgrown areas. Advice had been sources from Somerset and vegetation growing up such as nettles etc would be Highways, overgrown hanging areas would be down to the landowner. Further advice was needed from the Ramblers Association but a suggestion was from the Footpath Sub-Committee a Working Group be set up to look at areas they could address easily.

Cllr Nicholls advised that wild boar had been pictured and for walkers to stay vigilant

1. **Network Rail**

Nothing further.

1. **Biodiversity**

Cllr Sewell had attended a riverfly sampling at Cook’s Farm. This was very interesting that something that could eventually be done in the Parish.

**07.23/24.08 Witham Water**

Nothing of note reported.

**07.23/24.09 Dovecote**

The survey had been considered by Councillors in detail. Long discussion ensued about the Licence to Occupy, community space, working arrangements and use as a Reading Room. In order to consider rents on the property a detailed quotation was needed – this would allow the Council to consider up coming budgets alongside setting the precept and offsetting any income from rental.

Cllr Knowles credited Cllr Ferrari for the work she had put in on the Dovecote thus far, which was echoed by those present. Cllr Ferrari also thanked those looking to use the space for their efforts in cleaning up the inside.

**Resolved: Cllr Ferrari would investigate rental costs, Cllr Coate would arrange quotations. Written usage provisions to be detailed by the Solicitor.**

**07.23/24.10 Matters referred to the meeting / Clerk**

Distgen – A letter from Distgen had been received. This would be publicised in the village as there was a possibility of a further wind turbine.

D-Day – a request for beacon lighting to celebrate the 80th Anniversary was requested

**Resolved: It was agreed to support this request**

**06.23/24.11 Dates of Further Meetings**

Next Meeting 8th August 2023 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

A signed copy of the minutes can be viewed by arrangement via the Parish Clerk.